



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE
National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration
NATIONAL MARINE FISHERIES SERVICE
1315 East-West Highway
Silver Spring, Maryland 20910

January 3, 2024

Mr. Jacob Mercurief
Mayor, City of Saint Paul
Saint Paul, AK 99660

Dear Mr. Mercurief:

Thank you for your letter requesting a federal fishery resource disaster determination pursuant to the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act (MSA) for the 2023/2024 Bering Sea snow crab fishery in Alaska. I am responding on behalf of the Secretary of Commerce to acknowledge receipt of your request and to inform you that the Fishery Resource Disasters Improvement Act, which was passed in the Consolidated Appropriations Act of 2023, has amended the MSA, and the Secretary is required to respond with her determination within 120 days after receipt of all the necessary data to conduct the analysis.

The National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) conducts the evaluation needed for the Secretary's fishery resource disaster determinations. We will work with the City of Saint Paul, the State of Alaska, and the Alaska Department of Fish and Game to assess whether a fishery resource disaster has occurred under the MSA.

Based on our initial review of your request, we will need the following information to assess whether a fishery resource disaster has occurred under the MSA. You have up to 1 year from the date of this acknowledgment letter to submit all necessary information. To ensure we have a complete request, please provide all of the following information to our Alaska Region point of contact, Stephanie Warpinski, at Stephanie.Warpinski@noaa.gov:

- A clear definition of the fishery(ies) and sector(s) (e.g., commercial, dealer/processors) or components thereof (e.g., the for-hire component of the recreational sector), including identification of all presumed affected fish stocks, the appropriate fishery management entity or entities (federal or non-federal), and the geographical boundaries of the relevant fishery or fisheries.¹
- 12 months of finalized revenue data for the affected fishery(ies) and sector(s) or components thereof of the requested fishery resource disaster.
- Annual revenues in real dollars² of the affected fishery by sector for years 2015-2020 when there were no positive fishery resource disaster determinations.

¹ The fishery as a whole is typically considered; for a federal fishery, NMFS will use the fishery as described in the relevant federal fishery management plan, though the requester(s) may provide a rationale for sub-units of a fishery or sub-regions, based on how the fishery is managed (i.e., for a state fishery the sub-units or sub-regions should have been treated as a unit for management purposes prior to the disaster).

² A price index must be used in order to adjust monetary estimates in previous years to 2022 dollars. We generally recommend using annual estimates of the Bureau of Economic Analysis' (BEA) Implicit Price Deflator for Gross Domestic Product (GDP deflator) because it includes prices for all domestically produced goods and services and is therefore broader than other indexes. Quarterly estimates may be needed if the 12-month disaster time period cuts across different calendar years (e.g., July 2021-June 2022). The BEA's annual and quarterly estimates can be found via their [interactive query tool](#).



If available/applicable, please provide additional information:

- Fishery characteristics (size and value; number of participants; whether jobs are full- or part-time; status of recovery from previous fishery resource disasters; and landings data).
- Length of time the fishery (or access to it) has been or will be restricted.
- Any additional information you are able to provide about the cause of the fishery resource disaster (e.g., published research, stock assessments, state reports, status of recovery from previous fishery resource disasters).
- If applicable, any negative impacts to ceremonial or subsistence fishing activities.
- If applicable, information on lost resource tax revenues for the 12 months of the disaster year and the previous 5-year average for years 2015-2020.

We look forward to working with you on this request. If you have any questions, please contact Makeda Okolo, Director of NOAA's Office of Legislative and Intergovernmental Affairs, at makeda.okolo@noaa.gov.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Janet Coit", is written over a light blue rectangular background.

Janet Coit
Assistant Administrator
for Fisheries